Inventory of the Records of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services

Collection number: R149

California State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State
Sacramento, California

Processed by:
Michael McNeil
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Encoded by:
Lisa C. Prince

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Inventory of the Records of the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services
Dates: 1964-2006
Collection number: R149
Creator: Governor’s Office of Emergency Services
Collection Size: 6 cubic feet
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California

Abstract: The California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) is a state agency charged with protecting lives and property by effectively preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from all threats, crimes, hazards, and emergencies. Six cubic feet of textual records cover the years 1964-2006 and are organized into three series: After Action Reports, Disaster Files, and Division Correspondence. Some recurring topics in the collection include: hazardous material spills, wildfires, earthquakes, and flooding.

Physical location: California State Archives
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
While the majority of the records are open for research, any access restrictions are noted in the record series descriptions.

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Preferred Citation
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Agency History
The California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services (OES) is a state agency charged with protecting lives and property by effectively preparing for, preventing, responding to, and recovering from all threats, crimes, hazards, and emergencies.

Office of Civil Defense, 1950-1955
Created in 1950 by the California State Legislature and referred to as the "Civil Defense Act of 1950," the California Office of Civil Defense functioned as part of the Governor’s Office. Formulated at the time because of the existing and increasing possibility of the occurrence of disasters or emergencies of unprecedented size and destructiveness resulting from enemy attack, sabotage or other hostile action, and in order to insure that preparations of the State would be able to adequately deal with such disasters or emergencies, and provide for common defense and to protect the public peace, health, and safety and to preserve the lives and property of the people of the State. The Office of Civil Defense conducted the
necessary planning, coordination, and other measures required to provide maximum protection for California's people from
the elements of both natural and war-caused disasters.

In 1956 the "Civil Defense Act of 1950" was amended by the 1956 1st extra session Chapter 56 making a name change for
the agency to the California Disaster Office. The new amendment made provisions for the governor to create advisory
committees in order to assist in specific fields of civilian protection, war services and disaster mitigation.

California Disaster Office, 1956-1970

The California Disaster Office continued to carry the same mission as its predecessor by assisting the Governor of California
in the development of a disaster plan and program. A level of coordination with Federal agencies and adjoining states also
proved a crucial task for the California Disaster Office in order for the state to be properly prepared for natural or manmade
disaster. The agency's main objectives included maintaining an operationally ready statewide organization and a mutual
aid framework whereby local jurisdictions and the state can render all possible assistance to disaster areas when control is
beyond the capability of the jurisdiction involved. Divisions that the agency contained during this time included
Administrative Division, Communications and Warning Division, Emergency Operations and Programming Division,
Equipment and Federal Assistance Division, Public Safety Division, Radiological Safety Division, and Utilities Division.

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services 1970-2008

In 1970, the California Disaster Office underwent a name change to the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services
(OES). Authority for OES and its activities is contained in the Government Code as established by Chapter 1454, Statutes of
1970. The agency continued to operate as part of the Governor's Office retaining the mission of the California Disaster
Office by dealing with problems arising from natural or manmade disasters anywhere in the state.

California Emergency Management Agency 2008-2012

In 2008 Assembly Bill 38 (Chapter 372, Statutes of 2008) created the cabinet level office of California Emergency
Management Agency or CalEMA. The newly created agency superseded the California Office of Emergency Services and the
California Office of Homeland Security. The bill provided for the merged agency to preside over the preparedness of
disasters in California.

Office of Emergency Services 2012-Present

A fourth and final name change occurred for the agency with the passage of Governor Brown's Reorganization Plan No. 2
(2012) effective July 3, 2012. The Governor's Reorganization Plan No. 2 established that unless the context clearly requires
otherwise, whenever the term "California Emergency Management Agency" appears in any statute, regulation, or contract,
or in any other code it shall be construed to refer to the Office of Emergency Services. The vision of today's Office of
Emergency Services is to be, "the leader in emergency management and homeland security through dedicated service to
all." The organization's mission is to "... protect lives and property, build capabilities, and support our communities for a
resilient California."

Scope and Content

The records of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services consist of 6 cubic feet of textual records covering the years
1964-2006 and are organized into three series: After Action Reports, Disaster Files, and Division Correspondence. Some
recurring topics in the collection include: hazardous material spills, wildfires, earthquakes, and flooding.

The After Action Reports series provides the bulk of the record group. The After Action reports yield information on how the
agency handled disasters and how to better prepare for a similar disaster or emergency. The records generated in the After
Action Report series span the years 1964-1992. Notable After Action Reports include Los Angeles Civil Unrest (1992), the
Whittier Earthquake (1987), and various other earthquakes, hazardous material spills and wildfires.

The Disaster Files series contains information regarding various disasters and their immediate aftermath. Types of
documents found in the Disaster Files include weather reports, water reports, local disaster proclamations, gubernatorial
disaster proclamations, presidential disaster proclamations, news releases, resolutions, and newspaper articles.

The Division Correspondence is the final series of the collection. The series contains correspondence within the division and
with other state and federal agencies spanning the years 1990-2006. Many subjects and topics are found within the division
correspondence including fiscal operations for various years, project and planning summaries and outlines notably the
Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).

Accruals

Further accruals are expected.

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library’s online public access catalog.
Natural disasters
Earthquakes

R149.001 Series 1 After Action Reports 1975-1992
Physical Description: 86 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by After Action Report title.
Scope and Content Note
The After Action Reports include materials related to courses of action taken after the occurrence of a disaster. The reports are titled after the disaster name including Whittier Narrows Earthquake, Cantara Loop Hazardous Materials Incident, Los Angeles Riots, Tropical Storm Kathleen, Loma Prieta Earthquake, Medfly Eradication, and Humphrey the Humpback Whale. Documents in the series may include Presidential proclamations, Governor Proclamations, Situation Reports, Damage Assessment Reports, and Newspaper Clippings. Topics include various California earthquakes, hazmat spills, riots, flooding, oil spills, fires, and hurricanes.
For a list of After Action Reports, see Appendix A in Additional Series Information.
Additional Series Information
Appendix A: List of After Action Reports

R149.002 Series 2 Disaster Files 1983-1988
Physical Description: 36 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged numerically by disaster number.
Scope and Content Note
The Disaster Files consist of materials relating to various California disasters and include documents such as local disaster proclamations, newspaper articles, situation reports, gubernatorial proclamation, water reports, weather reports, and audits. Disaster File topics include wildfires, floods, and winter storms. Notable files include the Whittier Fault Earthquake and the storm of 1986.
Disaster 677: Storm of 1983, 1983 (18ff) Box 4:10-20, Box 5:1-6
Disaster 739: Fires of 1985, 1985 (4ff) Box 5:7-10
Disaster 758: Storm of 1986, 1986 (8ff) Box 5:11-18
Disaster 812: Storm of 1988, 1988 (3ff) Box 6:3-5

R149.003 Series 3 Division Correspondence 1990-2006
Physical Description: 11 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of correspondence.
Scope and Content Note
The Division Correspondence series contains correspondence pertaining to various disasters that occurred throughout the state. The series contains correspondence within the Governor's Office of Emergency Services and with other federal and state agencies. Much of the correspondence is of the Director of the agency, with most topics pertaining to disaster preparedness and training including the development of the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS). The files contain the correspondence of the agency's director and other high level employees, the Governor of California, and various individuals from other local, state and federal agencies.